UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1996/970
22 November 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 22 NOVEMBER 1996 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 22 November 1996, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I would appreciate your bringing it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

96-33487 (E) 221196

/...

Annex

Letter dated 22 November 1996 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1031 (1995), I attach the twelfth report on implementation force (IFOR) operations. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

Sadly, over the past month, we have witnessed several dangerous incidents arising from the return of refugees across the Inter-Entity Boundary Line into areas in and near the Zone of Separation. Agreed procedures were not followed, weapons were reintroduced into the Zone of Separation, and violence resulted. Whilst IFOR has taken firm action to defuse these incidents and prevent further ones, military measures are no substitute for a longer-term political strategy to bring about cooperation and reconciliation. The international community must continue to bring pressure to bear on the members of the Bosnian Presidency to translate into concrete agreements the political commitments they have entered into, most recently at the Paris Conference.

As we prepare for the end of IFOR's mission, I should like to assure you that the force's overall capability will be retained through 20 December, and that it will continue to carry out its responsibilities until that time. In the meantime, NATO is actively considering, in close cooperation with the non-NATO contributors to IFOR, how it can best contribute to consolidating the peace beyond 1996.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Twelfth Report to the United Nations Security Council on IFOR Operations

IFOR Operations

1. The multi-national implementation force (IFOR) currently comprises approximately 51,000 personnel deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia from all the NATO nations and from 17 non-NATO troop contributors. With IFOR now in the last phase of its mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, personnel numbers are decreasing as nations begin to transfer their forces out of the theatre. IFOR's overall capability will, however, be retained until December, when its mandate comes to an end.

2. The deployment of HQ LANDCENT into Bosnia and Herzegovina, which began on 1st October, is now complete. On 7th November, General Crouch succeeded Admiral Lopez as COMIFOR. The Transfer of Authority (TOA) from HQ ARRC to the new IFOR HQ took place on 20th November.

3. IFOR air assets continue to provide the capability required to secure the air space, defend and support IFOR ground forces, provide support to civilian agencies within mission capabilities, and monitor compliance with the Peace Agreement. IFOR maritime assets also remain deployed in support of the Operation.

4. IFOR continues to fulfil its primary mission to implement the military tasks of the Peace Agreement. During the reporting period, IFOR troops have continued to inspect cantonment sites and have confiscated and destroyed weapons. Patrolling has been increased in order to counter the risks arising from increased tension in and around the Zone of Separation (ZOS) and the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) caused by the return of refugees to their former homes (paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 below refer). Subject to the fulfilment of this primary mission, IFOR has continued to provide support to the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and to the other civilian organizations in theatre, including through the provision of security for the joint Presidency meetings.

5. IFOR has continued to provide support to the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES) throughout the reporting period, through regular, coordinated close air support training missions over Eastern Slavonia.

Cooperation and Compliance by the Parties

6. The Parties remain in general compliance with the military aspects of the Peace Agreement. The movement and storage of air defence and heavy weapons is complete, and the majority of incidents of non-compliance over the reporting period have been minor, involving the confiscation of small arms and explosives..

7. During the reporting period, however, there has been an escalation in the number of incidents relating to civilian Freedom of Movement (FOM) and

Freedom of Return (FOR). With respect to FOM, there have been continued restrictions in the Stolac and Mostar area. The bus service established between Prijedor and Sanski Most has been stopped, with no plans for its resumption in the near future. Tension also continued to run high in the Maglaj area. During the first two weeks of November, IFOR and the United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) dismantled five illegal civilian checkpoints.

8. With respect to FOR, houses belonging to every ethnic group have been destroyed - by bulldozer, arson or explosion - in villages near the ZOS in an attempt to prevent refugees from returning. On 11th November, in the most serious incident to date, several hundred Bosniacs, many of whom were armed, crossed the IEBL at Celic, south of Brcko, to occupy the small village of Grajevi on the Serb side of the ZOS. Following an ultimatum from the Bosnian Serb military authorities for the Bosniacs to leave, negotiations took place between IFOR and the Bosnian Serbs. However, on 12th November, there was an exchange of gunfire between Bosnian Serbs and Bosniacs which resulted in at least one death and several wounded from both sides. IFOR troops cordoned off the area and succeeded in quelling the disturbance and in restoring calm, although the situation remained tense. There is clear evidence that some of the Bosniac refugees were armed, and that Bosniac army personnel were involved. On the Bosnian Serb side, there were also violations of the weapons ban in the ZOS. Thus, on 14th November, IFOR and the IPTF confiscated approximately 4,000 weapons from a Bosniac army storage site and a number of small arms from a Bosnian Serb police station at Koraj. IFOR has now set up a temporary Restricted Operating Zone (ROZ) around Celic, within which all long-barrelled weapons and military personnel have been prohibited.

9. On 12th November, IFOR, the OHR, the IPTF and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) protested to the joint Presidency and to the President of the Federation and the Republika Srpska that the Koraj/Celic incident was a serious violation both of the provisions of the Peace Agreement and of the procedure established for return and reconstruction in the ZOS. This Procedure has now been suspended for the entire ZOS, and the International Commission will neither receive nor process any new or old applications for return. IFOR continues to urge all Parties to take steps to prevent further such incidents.

10. No Party is yet judged to be in compliance as far as mine clearing is concerned. It is estimated that only 11% of the total number of mine fields in Bosnia have been cleared, and there have been minimal efforts made in this respect. IFOR has therefore imposed selective bans on training activities and movements on units from all three Parties until adequate demining operations are undertaken.

11. On 12th November, President Plavsic of the Republika Srpska informed IFOR that Maj. Gen. Colic had been sworn in as the new Chief of the General Staff of the RS Army. She further requested that all international agencies conduct all military and related business with him. IFOR is complying with this request in close concert with the OHR.

Cooperation with International Organizations

12. IFOR's close cooperation with the international civil organizations in Bosnia continues. At the end of October, IFOR and IPTF, together with the local authorities, set up Operation COMET, aimed at preventing the destruction of property in the ZOS and apprehending offenders. In addition, IFOR support has been provided to the IPTF in Mostar in monitoring the local police force and in helping to ensure the disbandment of unauthorized civilian armed groups.

13. Support has continued to be provided to the OHR in its efforts to develop the common institutions and the supporting constitutional framework. The provision of experts, transport and communications support, and support for short-term rehabilitation and construction projects will continue.

14. IFOR continues to support the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in its responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the Article II Confidence-and-Security-Building-Measures Agreement and the Article IV Subregional Arms Control Agreement. IFOR continues to share relevant information on weapons holding with the OSCE on a regular basis.